

Working with Difficult People
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Q: What do we mean by “difficult people?”

The Big Baby	The Lazy Dog	My way or the highway
Doom and gloom	The sound of silence...	The most difficult person? ME?

Helpful strategies

A. The problem with personalizing

Problem 1: You can see behavior but you cannot see what’s behind it

Problem 2: The default mode may be stuck

B. Fundamental attribution error: “Don’t judge my outsides with your insides”

Building on A, one must be careful not to confuse internal and external factors

C. The Principle of Least Intervention: “An ounce of prevention...”

D. Self-talk is Good Medicine

“Thank you for sharing your anger, I’m not allowed to accept gifts.”

E. Own the problem

Solve the problem vs. Win the argument

Decrease defensiveness, increase receptivity

FORMULA: "I have a problem. When you _____ (specific behavior), then _____
(specific consequences) happens, and I feel _____. And I don’t like that."

F. Don’t conflate the level of concern with the degree of knowledge

Q1: How much does this person know?

Q2: How much does this person care? **[Tip: Answer the questions IN ORDER]**

G. Keep your sense of Humor

H. Spiritual Solutions

I. Don’t forget the Counseling Center

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Q: Now what? I tried it, it didn’t work ☹

When faced with an immovable obstacle (i.e., the other person):

1. Deal with it
2. Leave the relationship/environment
3. Change your behavior
4. Change your attitude

Is this fair? No. *But who said life was fair?*